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Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey

Remember to bring cookies
for Matt Talbot prior to the
second Monday of the month.



November Helpers

Lector—Jeff Atkinson

Communion Assistant—Laurie Atkinson

Cleaners Week 1/2—Linda Sestak

Week 3/4—Mike and Virg Unverferth

Usher—open

Altar—Laurie Atkinson

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Foundations

At our last adult Bible study on Paul’s letter to the Corinthian church, we talked about foundations. As a church, what is our foundation? Paul makes it pretty clear to the Corinthians early on in the letter... he tells them he came among them preaching only Christ crucified.

Our foundation is Jesus. We even have a song – The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. And even more than that, it’s Christ crucified....and risen...for the sake of the world. That’s the gospel.

Knowing our foundation becomes important when we deal with conflict within the church...and really if we are going to approach conflict anywhere. As Jesus’ followers that should be our foundation. The Corinthian church was full of conflict. There were divisions based on personalities of leaders and teachers. There were divisions between rich and poor. Arrogance and sexual immorality were problems. It was a culture not so different in some ways from ours.

Some Christian churches will say their foundation is the Bible...God’s word. We say something different when we say our foundation is THE Word...Jesus. The Bible is the word written down by people, inspired by their spiritual experience of God’s love and guidance. But the Bible is also shaped by the time and place of its authors. Paul’s letters are dealing with specific issues in specific congregations. Some of those are very specific to the time and some are timeless. The challenge in our time is to discern which is which.

When we say our foundation is the crucified Christ, then it changes our proclamation and it changes how we are as Jesus’ followers. No longer can we act from a place of human understanding of power. No longer can we argue from a position of moral or intellectual superiority. Instead, we come from a position in which we stand with a wounded, bleeding and suffering God. It really boils down to letting go of our own agendas and getting on board with God’s.

That should shape how we deal with conflicts in the church, in our families and in the political realm in several ways. But how do we get on board with God’s agenda?

First, we have to admit that the best thinking of the best and brightest...the religious and government leaders...in the first century Roman Empire put God on a cross. When we are sure we have all the answers, we need to consider the possibility that we will in some form do it again. Reading...and acting... through the lens of the cross brings us to a place of profound humility.

Second, we can rely on the teachings of Jesus. We can find them in the gospels. Here are some of the more helpful when we want to discern how to live as Jesus people – including handling conflict.

³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ [Jesus] said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (*Matthew 22:36-40*)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. (*Matthew 5:43-45 – this is part of the Sermon on the Mount...Matthew 5 – 7...all of which is helpful*)

Care for the sick, the hungry, the thirsty, the poor, the prisoner, the foreigner: ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

The parable of the Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32

As Jesus’ followers, I believe we are called to a ministry of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. Having the crucified and risen Christ as our foundation, I hope we can lead the way as we navigate the truly difficult waters of conflict and division that are so prominent in our culture today.

Christ’s peace,

Pastor Kris

Nebraska Synod Prison Ministry News

Freed for Life is a primary fund-raiser for the Nebraska Synod’s prison ministries. It’s coming up November 10 at Sheridan Lutheran Church. Doors open at 5 pm with exhibitor booths of various prison ministries set up. These ministries are very important. Pastor Kris has a table at the Freed for Life dinner with space for 6 people. Talk to her if you would like to go.

The Nebraska Synod ministries include Followers of Christ, a congregation within the walls of the penitentiary; Bridges to Hope, an organization that helps people with what they need to transition from prison to community life; and FEAST—a ministry at Our Saviour’s Lutheran that brings folks from Community Corrections for worship and a meal each Sunday. FEAST also has other programs to help formerly incarcerated people transition successfully.

Also, Bridges to Hope is looking for people who are willing to be monthly donors, even if a small amount. That will improve their eligibility for certain grants.

Followers of Christ has called a new pastor—Pastor Rob Corum. I hope to get a group to attend worship there early in 2020.

November Calendar

November 3	10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion—All Saint’s Sunday We will light candles in remembrance of those who have died 11:30 am—Adult Education
November 10	10:30 am—Worship at Saunders Care Center— No worship at Bethlehem 5:00 pm—Freed For Life Dinner
November 17	10:30 am—Worship with Holy Communion 11:30 am—youth group 11:30 am—Adult Education
November 24	10:30 am—Worship 11:30 am—Adult Ed—last session

Church for the Sake of the World: Serving the world God loves

- We have several fall service projects. At this writing, we are finishing up our collection for Heroes into Homes. Heroes into Homes is connected to Victory Gardens, an apartment building for homeless veterans on the VA grounds. The collection will help stock their pantry with non-perishable food items, cleaning and hygiene products and household items. After November 3rd, the items will go to their collection site so if you’re planning to bring something, we need it by then. Put them on the left-hand side of the box under the alcove table.
- The Potato Bake was a great success. We connected with the community and raised enough money to pool with our Immanuel Vision Foundation Grant to send nearly \$1400 to the Lutheran Center at UN-L for their building project.
- We will share worship with the residents at Saunders County Care Center
- The Center for People in Need will hold their annual Toyland December 14-16. We usually volunteer as a congregation on Saturday morning. In the meantime please bring donations of toys (especially for older kids) and diapers.
- Earlier in the year some of us talked to the activity director at Saunders Care Center. They do a “shopping” event for their residents to buy Christmas gifts for family. They take donations for that event and are typically mostly in need of gifts for men. I’ll find out more detail but if you happen to see a good sale grab something.

And as always, being Church for the Sake of the World is you being the church in your everyday places —home, work, school, on social media, everywhere. Let’s see how much the church, practicing Jesus’ command to love your neighbor as yourself, can change the world, one encounter at a time.